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TAGS: [PRL](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: Sudan: Door Open to Restoring Relations with
Chad

¶1. Summary: At high levels, Sudan publicly denies involvement in Chad, and has declined to sever diplomatic relations or to expel the Chadian charge d'affaires from Khartoum. Sudan also maintains that the door is open for closer engagement with Chad. In general, the tone of the official Sudanese response to Chad's breaking of relations is one of innocence. End summary.

¶2. In an April 15 interview with the Voice of America, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman Ambassador Jamal Muhammed Ibrahim stated that Sudan had no connection with events in Chad, and that Chad's "allegations are baseless." He added Sudan regretted Chad's decision to expel the Sudanese charge d'affaires from Ndjamen. Ibrahim said that although this constituted a crisis, Sudan thought it temporary and believed it could be resolved within the African Union.

¶3. According to the Sudan Tribune on-line news service, during an April 16 meeting with UN Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations Hedi Annabi, President Bashir declared that Sudan was committed to the Tripoli Agreement with Chad, and had no interest in destabilizing it, as doing so would affect Sudan negatively.

¶4. According to a translation of Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio in Arabic, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) Spokesman, Brigadier General Uthman Muhammad al-Aghbash, denied on April 16 involvement of the SAF in the coup attempt in Chad.

¶5. In an April 16 telephone interview with Sawt Al Arab radio in Egypt, as reported by Cairo MENA in English, Minister of Justice Mohammad Ai al-Mardi said that Sudan was surprised both by Chad's accusations and its decision to break diplomatic relations. Mardi accused "international powers and western organizations" as the source of Chad's accusations, and added that this "fabricated crisis is part of a foreign scheme targeting Sudan and its resources."

¶6. Dr. Mustafa Ismail, Presidential Advisor for foreign policy and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated on April 16 that the Sudanese Government does not intend to take the same action of breaking diplomatic relations or expelling the Chadian ambassador. Quoted in Arabic daily newspaper Al-Khartoum Daily, he added that ties between the two states are between the people, and are above the level of the political leadership.

¶7. On April 17, Foreign Minister Lam Akol stated that Sudan had made several attempts to maintain bilateral relations with Chad, and had decided to send a presidential envoy to Chad in hopes of mending fences,

although the Government of Chad had rejected the overture. He added that Libya would look after Sudan's affairs in Ndjamena in the latter's absence.

¶18. Also on April 17, according to Sudan Daily Vision, a pro-government English daily newspaper, Assistant to the President and National Congress Party Spokesman Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie denied that Sudan was extending support to the Chadian rebels. He added that Sudan's doors were open if Chad wishes to improve ties.

¶19. Local press commentary has been restrained. Most editorials express hope that relations between the two countries will soon be patched up (Al Ayaam, April 16; Sudan Vision, April 17). Several suggest that Chad's problems are largely of their own making (Al-Sahafa, April 16; Khartoum Monitor, April 17), while the pro-government Sudan Vision - in a piece entitled "Restrained Response Sometimes Misconstrued," April 18) -- is now firmly denying Sudanese complicity. The pro-Southern English-language paper, The Citizen (April 17), on the other hand, argues that Chad was right: "Sudan wants to export Arabism to African nations," and "is always interfering in the domestic affairs" of its neighbors.

STEINFELD